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U. S. Department of Agriculture.

THE Kadota Fig

PART II

CHARACTERISTICS, REQUIREMENTS,
HABITS OF GROWTH, CROP YIELDS



PUBLISHED BY

THE BECKWITH FIG GARDENS CO.

GROWERS :: PRESERVERS :: SHIPPERS

of KADOTA Figs

REEDLEY, CALIFORNIA

CHARACTERISTICS

So much has been said about the Kadota, that it would scarcely be necessary to dwell upon its characteristics, but for the sake of the newcomer and the uninformed, we will repeat briefly the principal reasons that enable the Kadota Fig to hold its unique position:

It is light golden in color, rich in sugar, delicate in flavor.

The skin is so thin as to be considered "skinless" by the trade when preserved and the flesh is so firm as to enable it to stand up under processing and fresh shipping.

It does not sour, split or smut.

Nature has made its seeds so small as to be practically invisible after preserving.

Such are the main characteristics that make this fig unexcelled for all fresh shipping and preserving purposes; plain, spiced, glazed, candied, marmalades or jams.

NO CAPRIFICATION NECESSARY

The Kadota does not need any Caprification in order to mature as do the Smyrna varieties which will not develop without pollinization from the male Capri Fig. It is easily Caprified, however, a fact which we mention on account of the question often being raised, not because it is desirable to do so. The effect of Caprification is to increase its size, fill the inside with fertile seeds, turn the skin a light green and the inside a strawberry color. While the increased size may enhance its value as a dried fig, all four effects are detrimental from a preserving standpoint and throws such figs into a second grade.

CLIMATIC AND SOIL REQUIREMENTS—PESTS

The Kadota is adaptable to a great range of territory. Although it develops best in the San Joaquin Valley, it will thrive from San Diego to Shasta and from the Sierras to the Coast. But a change in the location of the fig is invariably accompanied by a change in the character of the fruit and the interior section of the State with its long season and drier atmosphere is best for commercial purposes. The ordinary rains which are so disastrous to the Calimyrna and Adriatic do not hurt the Kadota. In fact, the early fall rains seem to inspire the fig with a new vigor and some of the best pickings come just after these early rains. So far, there is no reason to believe the Kadota to be any more susceptible to frost than any other variety. All young fig trees are tender and liable to be hurt by severe frosts until the trees get well up from the ground and hardened. An extremely hot spell, continued for several days in succession where the thermometer ranges from 105 and above will doubtless burn the sides of those figs that are exposed to the sun. The only precaution necessary, and we may say from our experience that it is successful, is to make sure that

the tree has received thorough irrigation and if it is possible during this period to give the trees a good flooding, it will prevent sunburn. In our own gardens we had conclusive proof of this last year. Those trees, that for various reasons did not secure a good flooding, were more or less affected by sunburn while the fruit in the other trees came through unburnt. This only applies to those figs approaching ripeness during the hot spell.

The Kadota will thrive in almost any kind of soil if given water and plenty of it. Perhaps no tree responds more quickly to good soil conditions. We know of several good trees growing on sandy soil but most vigorous growth has been obtained in heavy soils which lie along the eastern side of the San Joaquin. This does not mean that they may not grow as well in other heavy soils but so far there have been no plantings to judge from.

The fact that the Kadota thrives best in heavy soils is a most fortunate characteristic as there is practically no molestation from the nematode, the root parasite which is an enemy of all trees, especially of the fig. During the last two years there has been a noticeable amount of red spider among the fig trees in several sections of the country. One reason why this is objectionable to the Kadota is that one effect would be to discolor the surface of the fruit. Since the good appearance of the preserved article depends upon the skin being free from blemishes of all kinds, it will pay to take preventive measures against the red spider if it once gets in the gardens. This is effectively eradicated through the use of the ordinary Bordeaux mixture or lime-sulphur sprays. So far but very little red spider has appeared in the Kadotas in this section. We might mention here also the importance of preventing a certain form of "die back." At the end of the season, there will usually be found a few figs still clinging to the tree which, by reason of the cold weather, have failed to mature. If these are not stripped off, they will decay and the exuding juice which spreads on the limb furnishes a home for certain injurious bacteria causing the so-called "die back." Along in December the figs can be jarred off quite readily with a lath.

HABITS OF GROWTH

The Kadota tree is an exceedingly fast grower, easily outstripping all other varieties. If left unpruned, it will adopt an open symmetrical, upward growth resembling more the Black Mission in its early stages. The two oldest trees that we know of in this section have been grown without pruning. They are now about fifteen years old and about 25 feet in height and the trunk about 15 inches in diameter at the ground. Our methods of pruning are to just reverse Nature's calculations. However illogical this may seem, it is the only way to produce the results we want in the development of the tree for the harvesting of the fresh fruit and is very successful. In a later article on Pruning, we will show how we can produce a very low branching form planted quite close together for the sake

of producing maximum yields in the shortest possible time.

Not only is this tree the most rapid grower but it is the earliest to come into bearing and exceeds all other varieties in crop yields. It bears two crops during the season, the first one on the old wood during the latter part of June and the first of July; the second, on the new wood from the first of August on until November or until cold weather prevents further maturing. As long as the tree remains green, producing new foliage, each leaf is accompanied by its fig, growing out at the junction of the stem with the branch. Many times there are two figs instead of just one during the early part of the second crop. The first crop figs are considerably different from the second. They are very much larger, do not hold up as well either under cooking or fresh shipping and consequently are not as good for cooking whole. These are used to make jams or marmalades, the quality of which is very fine. The second crop figs being smaller and more firm, are used for whole preserves. These figs ripen in periods, the heaviest part of the crop coming during August and September. The fact that the Kadota has fairly distinct ripening periods during September, October and November has lead many people to refer to the Kadota as having several crops. Correctly speaking, there are just two, as referred to before; the crop on the old wood and that on the new.

CROP YIELDS

As to possible yields of fresh figs, we can assure the grower that if planted at distances 20 or 25 feet apart at the start, and cared for intelligently and under good conditions, he may reasonably expect from one half a ton the third year to one and a half to two tons the sixth and probably six or eight tons by the tenth year. When mature, they should produce about ten tons per acre, judging from the fact that a good Adriatic orchard will produce three to four tons dry, and figuring that the dried weight is about one third the fresh. A fine example is the tree at Mr. Geo. Reynold's place at Orosi. It is about fifteen years old and is the parent tree from which most of our recent plantings have come. Mr. Reynolds will vouch to the fact that during the last two years, it has produced crops of about one half a ton green; so we offer this as evidence that our estimate of probable orchard tonnage is conservative. There are no mature plantings by which to show possible yields, but there are a few single trees planted here and there which are older.

PROBABLE RETURNS

Prices paid during the last two years have been from 8 to 10 cents a pound for the second crop and 5 to 6 cents for the first crop. Last year we paid 6 cents straight on the trees to two owners and relieved them of all picking. Supposing that in normal times the price would drop to 5 cents a pound delivered; allowing for a maximum of 2 cents for picking, leaving 3 cents net, this would be \$600 an acre. Making good allowances also for any possible unforeseen conditions, these returns should satisfy the most sanguine investor.